

## Wilson Lumpkin to Andrew Jackson, May 20, 1835, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### GOVERNOR WILSON LUMPKIN TO JACKSON.

Milledgeville, Ga., May 20, 1835.

*Dear Sir,* I should have written to you some time ago, upon the subject of our present Indian relations, but for the expectation of seeing Mr. Forsyth on his way through this place to Columbus, with whom I had intended to converse freely and fully on this subject, without troubling you with a direct address. But Mr. F. having passed here without my having an opportunity of seeing him, I have deemed it necessary, without further delay, to apprise you of the present posture of our affairs with the Indians, and also place you in possession of my views in regard to this deeply interesting subject.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, I incline to the opinion, that John Ross and his associates will have the address and influence to prevent the majority of the Cherokees from accepting, at present, the very liberal terms of the Treaty arrangement recently provided at Washington under your direction.

A large majority of the people, and the public authorities of Georgia however, are fully satisfied that you and the authorities of the Federal Government have done every thing that can and ought to be done, to settle this business, and to promote the interest and preserve the lives of this unfortunate remnant of deluded Indians. I have nothing further to ask in behalf of Georgia, from the Executive authorities of the Union, in the character of treaty proposals to the Cherokees; indeed I have, and do still protest against any further efforts to treat with John Ross and his white advisers, by any modification or alteration

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whatever, in the treaty lately negotiated by Ridge and others at Washington. I have not failed to let these my views be known extensively throughout the Cherokee part of Georgia; and I herewith enclose you a paper recieved this day, signed by many of the most respectable and influential citizens of that section, by which you will percieve that they coincide with the views which I have herein submitted. It is worse than useless to make any other effort to coax and flatter John Ross and his associates: nothing short of bribery and corruption can induce them to come to an amicable adjustment of our Cherokee perplexities; and these are conditions, which neither you nor myself can ever consent to be instrumental in consumating. Any honorable sacrifice, in the bounds of reason, ought to be made to settle these embarrassing Indian perplexities; but no result can be worse than for the public authorities of the country to sanction and foster the corrupt selfishness of base men. Ross and his friends would be perfectly satisfied with the proposed treaty, provided they could be entrusted with the disbursment of the consideration money.

I have carefully read the treaty, and was glad to percieve that its liberal provisions secure the interest of every individual attached to the Cherokee people, affording but limited opportunity for the aristocratic leaders of this unfortunate race to defraud them of their national inheritance. This is as it should be, and cannot fail to recieve the approbation of every honest man in the whole country. If any thing can induce the Cherokees to accept the treaty, it is a decisive, unwavering adherence to its provisions as they now stand. If the door is once opened for modifications, Ross and his friends will secure to themselves fortunes at the expense of the common Indians. The Indians, as well as the Whites, are tired of the present state of things, and would, if left to themselves, most gladly embrace the liberal offers of the government, and remove without delay. But there are *white men* as well as Ross, who oppose the treaty because *they* are not provided for by its stipulations. Under all the existing circumstances, I take the liberty of suggesting to you the expediency of your causing it to be immediately and distinctly understood by the Cherokees, that no modification of the late treaty may be expected. Should this course fail to produce the

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desired effect, other measures must then be resorted to with a view to the adjustment of our perplexities with Indian population.

The present condition of both Creeks and Cherokees who still remain in the States, is most deplorable. Starvation, and destruction await them if they remain much longer in their present abodes. Indians cannot live in the midst of a White population and be governed by the same laws. I am truly disgusted when I reflect upon the enormous frauds which have been committed upon the Indians by a small, but abandoned and selfish portion of our white population, and I regret to say, that under existing laws and circumstances, we are unable to restrain and punish these enormities. On the other hand, very many of our unoffending citizens who have settled amongst the Indians, both in Alabama and Georgia, under the legal sanction of the Federal and State governments, are living in a state of constant apprehension. Our white citizens are daily insulted, menaced, and injured by the depredations committed upon their stock and property, by the perishing, vagabond portion of these Savages; many of whom have no legal home in the country. Several murders have actually been committed and the lives of our citizens, in many places, are at the mercy of these reckless, lawless vagabonds. It is true that the laws of Georgia and Alabama have been extended over these Indians, but it is equally true, that in far the greatest number of cases, they cannot be enforced against offenders, for the want of an adequate white population; and because in nine cases out of ten, the offending Indian cannot be identified. The daily strifes which now exist, and which are increasing, between these Indians and the citizens of Georgia and Alabama, must continue, with aggravated mischiefs, so long as they remain in the states.

Have not these Indians lost all just claims to national character? Ought not these Indians to be considered and treated as the helpless wards of the Federal Government?

I am dear Sir, with great regard,